

NWPA JOB CONNECT BOARD MEETING

Via Skype
Friday, May 8, 2020
8:31 am

ATTENDANCE

Tyrone Clark 📞
Dr. William Clark 📞
Monica Daquilante 📞
Jim Decker 📞
Brittany Eisenman 📞
Larry Fannie 📞
Dr. Ray Feroz 📞
Jill Foys 📞
Dave Henderson 📞
Jack Hewitt 📞
Dr. Lisa Miller 📞
Erin Sekerak 📞
Gary Shaw 📞
Bradley Tisdale 📞
Elizabeth Wilson 📞

PPF STAFF

Janet Anderson 📞
Deb O'Neil 📞
Erin Shaffer 📞
Julie Price 📞
Carrie Symes 📞
Jackie Hamilton 📞

ABSENT

Mike Chevalier
Steven Davis
Jody Dixon
Dr. Aldo Jackson

VISITORS

Commissioner Wayne Brosius, Clarion County 📞
Commissioner Eric Henry, Crawford County 📞
Commissioner Robert Snyder, Forest County 📞
Commissioner Chip Abramovic, Venango Cty 📞
Commissioner Tricia Durbin, Warren County 📞
Diona Brick, County of Venango 📞
Benjamin Wilson, PA CareerLink®/Operator 📞
Silvana Rabat-Lavor, GECAC 📞
Nancy Sabol, St. Benedict Education Ctr/EARN 📞
Anita McCoy, GECAC 📞
Deb Lutz, SVA/SEWN 📞
Sheila Sterrett, Senator Pat Toomey's Office 📞
Brad Moore, Congressman G. Thompson's Ofc 📞
Carm Camillo, PA CareerLink®/Title I 📞
Mary Bula, Erie Together 📞
Dave Mascaro, PA L&I, Unemployment Comp 📞
Jeanna Noel, PA L&I BWDA 📞
Beverly Rapp, PA L&I BWPO, Rapid Response 📞

WELCOME/ROLL CALL/VISITOR RECOGNITION

Mr. Decker called the meeting to order at 8:31 am. Roll call was taken. It was noted there was a quorum. Visitors introduced themselves.

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda portion of the meeting included the following:

- a. Approval of February 14, 2020 Meeting Minutes
- b. Approval of Youth File Monitoring Report
- c. Approval of One Stop Operator Survey Report
- d. Approval of PY19 Operational Leadership Changes Monitoring Report

MOTION

It was moved by Mr. Henderson and seconded by Mr. Tisdale to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. All were in favor. Motion passed and carried.

FISCAL REPORT

Ms. Brick referred to her provided report, which included a narrative on the first page. She noted that spending is at 66% for Adult/Dislocated Worker, but she expects that to increase and be fully expended by the end of the year. Youth funding is at 62% spent, but due to COVID-19, some Work Experiences ended prematurely and this may affect the 20% Work Experience requirement. Ms. Brick noted that out-of-school youth spending is currently on target.

Ms. Brick noted that administrative funding is at about 61% spent and she is working with Ms. Anderson to address any issues. EARN spending is at 75% as expected for third quarter, and all performance payments through December have been received. The operating budgets for the PA CareerLink® operations are a little low, but some expected expenses coming from the state have yet to come through.

It was noted that Rapid Response funding is currently obligated, and additional \$127k is expected. An additional request of \$300k was submitted a week and a half prior to support operations and dislocated workers during COVID-19. Ms. Brick continues to be in regular correspondence with the state as this funding would be needed to support security and janitorial requirements of the Governor. There is some concern about funding from the state due to the strain caused by the pandemic.

Ms. Brick noted that budgets for next year are still fluid and may need a little more time than usual to work through them due to the conditions caused by the pandemic. Ms. Sterrett asked if the funding requests would be enough to support operations, and Ms. Anderson noted that not having the additional funding would impact the ability of the PA CareerLink® comprehensive sites to reopen and the addition of triage sites.

MOTION

It was **moved** by Mr. Henderson and **seconded** by Ms. Foys to approve the Fiscal Report. All were in favor. **Motion passed and carried.**

UPDATES FROM THE CHAIR

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS ACTION ITEMS

1. **A task force on the Command Center recommendations will be created and convene before the next committee meeting cycle in April.** This has been put on hold until receipt of guidance for the local planning process from the state.

COMMITTEE SCHEDULE & MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Decker noted that the new committee membership and schedule were linked in the packet. He acknowledged the new Committee Chairs nominated by their fellow committee members:

Lisa Miller & Aldo Jackson, co-chairs for the Business Solutions Committee
Tyrone Clark, Communications Committee Chair
Ray Feroz, Fiscal/Monitoring Committee Chair
Aldo Jackson, Governance Committee Chair
Brad Tisdale, Workforce Solutions Committee Chair
Jill Foys, Youth Committee Chair

OTHER

Mr. Decker noted that the system seems to be managing the pandemic situation as well as can be expected and noted the significant difficulty for people to access the overwhelmed unemployment system. Mr. Decker also noted that as this was the last meeting of the program year, it was his last meeting as chair. The board thanked him for his leadership.

SLATE OF OFFICERS UPDATE

RATIFICATION OF THE APPROVAL TO EXTEND DEADLINE FOR SLATE OF OFFICERS RATIFICATION OF THE APPROVAL TO EXTEND TREASURER TERM

Ms. O'Neil noted that local bylaws require that the slate of officers be approved at a regular meeting by April 15 of each year. Due to the shift in the board meeting schedule, it was not feasible to accomplish that this year. The Executive Committee was asked to extend the deadline to this meeting and the board is being asked to ratify that approval. Ms. O'Neil noted that the Nominating Committee developed a slate of officers according to the bylaws, noting the requirement for a representative from each of the six counties. Additionally, the bylaws limit officers from serving more than two consecutive terms in a particular office. There was hesitation by newer appointed officers to accept the Treasurer position, so staff was asked to reach out to Dr. Feroz to gauge his willingness to serve an additional term in the Treasurer role, and he was willing to do so.

MOTION

It was moved by Mr. Henderson and seconded by Ms. Foys to ratify the approval to extend the deadline for the slate of officers and the approval to extend the Treasurer term. All were in favor. Motion passed and carried.

APPROVAL OF THE SLATE OF OFFICERS

The slate presented by the Nominating Committee was as follows:

Tyrone Clark, Chair (Erie)
Monica Daquilante, 1st Vice Chair (Forest)
Dr. William Clark, 2nd Vice Chair (Warren)
Dr. Ray Feroz, Treasurer (Venango)
Elizabeth Wilson, Secretary (Crawford)
Brittany Eisenman, County Representative (Clarion)

MOTION

It was moved by Mr. Hewitt and seconded by Mr. Henderson to approve the slate of officers as presented. All were in favor. Motion passed and carried.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

RE-OPENING PLAN

Ms. Anderson noted that the plan to reopen to client appointments continues to feel like carving butter as the ground continues to shift. Much of the area moved to yellow today and she noted staff continues to conduct virtual appointments with clients. The offices are not ready to open, due mostly to the concern about financial assistance for requirements imposed. PPE and additional janitorial and security staff are required, and funding for those items are tied to grants which are not yet approved. Reopening the offices would help individuals that do not have the ability to work with the workforce system virtually. Other technology is being explored, such as video doorbells. Board staff has been compiling internet hot spots in the counties, and Title I staff are considering using supportive service dollars to support smart phones and service to allow clients to work with staff virtually. Ms. Anderson noted that the state notified areas this week that UC courtesy phones will be unavailable indefinitely and plan to provide language to use that will be consistent across the state. When the offices reopen, staff and clients will need to socially distance and occupancy limits will be adjusted to 50%. Computers and surfaces will need to be sanitized between uses. Staff will be broken up into teams in case there is a need to quarantine. There will be a plan to take temperatures and/or fill out forms prior to each workday. Ms. Anderson noted that partners have a daily call scheduled to work through the changing situation.

Ms. Anderson recounted the phone issues encountered early on, the board was made aware of this via email and the issues have been worked out. The operator is working on implementing a cloud-based phone system which can be utilized by cell phones, computers, or other devices.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION – VIRTUAL JOB FAIR UPDATE

Mr. Camillo reported on the recent virtual job fair, which was attended by 217 people, including 187 from the local six-county area and three from outside the state. Mr. Decker asked if the software can run job fairs all the time, and Mr. Camillo did not believe it could. Mr. Fannie noted that areas across the state are piloting lots of virtual efforts. He noted that the state had an employer portal site for those essential employers needing at least 10 new hires immediately.

OTHER BUSINESS

SOLICITOR UPDATE

Ms. Anderson noted that the CLEOs will be considering approval of the hiring of a solicitor at their subsequent meeting, as they are reviewing a proposal.

GRANT UPDATE

Ms. Anderson noted that in total. About \$2M has been requested in Rapid Response Additional Assistance, Strategic Innovation, and Dislocated Worker grant funding, but until any of that is received, staff and partners continue to be conservative and careful with planning. It is a challenge being one of the first areas to open. The state has also made it known that they will be conducting a rigorous review of all funding requests.

OTHER

Ms. Anderson read some highlights from the NWPA Job Connect Board Report, noting that the post-pandemic plan was submitted, multiple monitoring requests continue to come in from the state, all measures were met in the most recent performance update, states are requesting performance waiver on the basis of COVID-19, but states are very focused on UC, the Workforce Needs Assessment is somewhat delayed, and the state may be cross-training some of their own staff to support UC.

COMMENTS

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Clark thanked Mr. Decker for serving as chair, noting his exemplary service, especially during these challenging times. Dr. Feroz seconded this motion of thanks.

Mr. Decker noted that moving to the yellow phase is a new era that carries many emotions, noting that some believe the move is too early while others believe it is too late. He noted that every entity in the area has been impacted significantly and that the board should extend consideration as everyone moves forward, saying that the board should avoid being petty or expecting more than what is possible. The recovery will take an extended period of time. He also noted that if anyone had testing or other resources available, to please share them with each other.

Mr. Fannie noted that some departments in the state are having their staff cross-trained in UC services behind the scene to effectively assist claimants by reducing times and solving small issues.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

It was asked if the region could get unemployment numbers specific to the Northwest. Mr. Decker noted that staff has asked because those numbers would be helpful. However, it is not available. Ms. Anderson added that she and Mr. Fannie continue to ask for them, as do other areas of the state, during many opportunities. Mr. Mascaro noted that the state is working on compiling that information and he will pass it on once it is available. Mr. Fannie noted that UC has already processed over \$4 Billion in claims and the PUA site began processing claims on the previous day. However, he knows that is little comfort to those who have yet to receive their funds.

Ms. Deb Lutz referred to the COVID-19 Recovery Plan disseminated by staff at her request yesterday. The resource was compiled by SEWN, IRC, and Rapid Response along with community partners. Those with questions were encouraged to reach out.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION

It was moved by Dr. Clark and seconded by Ms. Foys to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. Motion passed and carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:38 am.

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS

Respectfully submitted,
Jacqueline Hamilton
NWPA Job Connect